

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

September 16, 2005

Hello this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

The start of a new school year is the time to look at some important ways we are making sure that every school sets high standards and helps children to meet them.

With our focus on student achievement, we in Michigan now have more schools than ever meeting the standards of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. We are on target with the Legislature to pass my proposal that will increase funding for K-12 education to record levels. And we are fighting to create a \$4,000 New Merit Scholarship that will guarantee all Michigan children the resources to earn college degree.

Now, this is critical because education is the ticket to success in the 21st century economy.

Today, the states with the highest number of college graduates are also the states with the lowest unemployment rates and the strongest economies.

That's why my administration is working to ensure that every child in Michigan continues their education after high school – whether it's technical training or a bachelor's degree. In fact, we intend to double the number of college graduates in Michigan in the next ten years. If we do that, we will be the most well educated state in the nation. And we will have the fastest growing economy.

To meet this goal, earlier this year I signed legislation that requires that starting with the class of 2008, high school students will now take a nationally recognized college entrance exam – like the ACT or the SAT – instead of our own MEAP test.

And since college is what we're driving at here, we have to give our kids the opportunity, the ambition, but also the skills they need, through courses that will help them succeed in college and in life.

In this global economy, other states and other countries have adopted requirements in critical fields like science and math. Today, unbelievably, our state law doesn't require a single course, other than civics, to graduate from high school.

That has got to change.

With Michigan's economic future on the line, we can't afford to have our 500 local school districts marching in different directions. Instead, we need a high standards, mandatory curriculum to get all our students on the road to higher education and a good paying job.

That's why I'm so pleased that our State Board of Education has responded to my challenge to create high standards for our high schools and will present its recommendation for a rigorous common curriculum by November 15th.

I believe so strongly in putting a degree in the hands of every single child. To do that we have to improve education at every level in Michigan. And by doing so, we'll help prepare our students for success in school, success in college, and we'll help our economy succeed.

Thank you for listening.